CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST 59
JULY 1981

Flowers of the Castlemaine Area

CORREA REFLEXA

(Common Correa or Native Fuchsia)
(Flowering Winter)

Rita Mills

Correa reflexa is an extremely variable plant, which is found mainly in the S.E. part of Australia. The flowers can be shades of red, yellow or green, or a combination of red and yellow or green.

The local form, which I know of from Chewton, Taradale and Muckleford is greenish-yellow and the bush is rather spindly at Taradale, almost prostrate at Muckleford.

Identification is by the two leaves which accompany the flowers, which are always reflexed down over the flowers.

C. reflexa. -Local form.

The leaves are more or less heart shaped, with a slightly wavy edge. The upper surface is darkish green, sometimes tinged with red. The convex under surface is pale with a brownish tinge because of a dense mass of interlocking "star" hairs. The flowers also have a roughish exterior, which, under the microscope, proves to be bunches of "star" hairs - a very attractive sight. The stems are also covered with short brownish hairs.

FLOWER SURFACE. x100.

LEAF, UNDERSIDE (CROSS SECTION). x100

Excursion Report

A Walk Through the Pine Forest — Leader: Rita Mills
Saturday, June 13, 1981

Our first activity was to have a closer look at the regrowth in an area of bush which had been burnt during the February 1980 fires. We noticed a number of Purple Coral-pea, (Hardenbergia violacea), Scented Sundews (Drosera whittakeri), Tall Sundews(D.auriculata), a and a particularly thick patch of Stringy-bark seedlings. Our four-year old son was quite pleased with himself when he discovered a tomato plant with tomatoes growing on it. Unfortunately we also noticed a number of plants such as Capeweed which had possibly been brought in on the tyres of the fire trucks.

Following Rita further into the bush over some hilly country, we saw Daphne Heath(Brachyloma daphnoides), Cranberry Heath (Astroloma humifusum), Wedge Pea (Gompholobium spp), Dwarf Greenhood (Pterostylis nana), and quite a lot of Dusty Miller plants (Spyridium parvifolium).

During our tea break on a rocky outcrop a White-eared Honeyeater and a Yellow Robin were observed. Then we headed through the young pines to Sepulchre Rock and a good view of the Barkers Creek hills.

From here we went downhill towards the bigger pines. On the way we saw some Grevillea alpina. In among the pines we found quite a variety of toadstools and fungi, including some beautiful spotted Agaric and some Saffron Milk Caps which some brave members took home to sample after reading in a book on hand that they were edible and needed to be cooked quickly with lemon juice to help to tenderize them. Later a member reported that they had eaten some with their roast that night and that they had found them to have quite an acceptable nutty flavour.

We thoroughly enjoyed the outing and so did our three young children.

Geraldine Harris.

The following extract from the "Argus" of 120 years ago is pertinent to an article which appears in the latest "Victorian Naturalist" on the efforts of the acclimatisation society to introduce European birds to make Australia seem more like home.

Blackbird Nesting We learn from the "Argus" that a blackbird is now building its nest in the Botanical Gardens, and the process is being regarded with considerable interest by those who are anxious for the acclimatisation of this glorious songster of the English woods.

The edible Bean of the Norfolk Island is in flower in the Gardens

In the same month, it is reported that Mr Tasker is now growing onions at Guildford, of up to one and a half pounds in weight.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMPOUT AUGUST 1981 BAMBRA

Program (Host club - Colac)

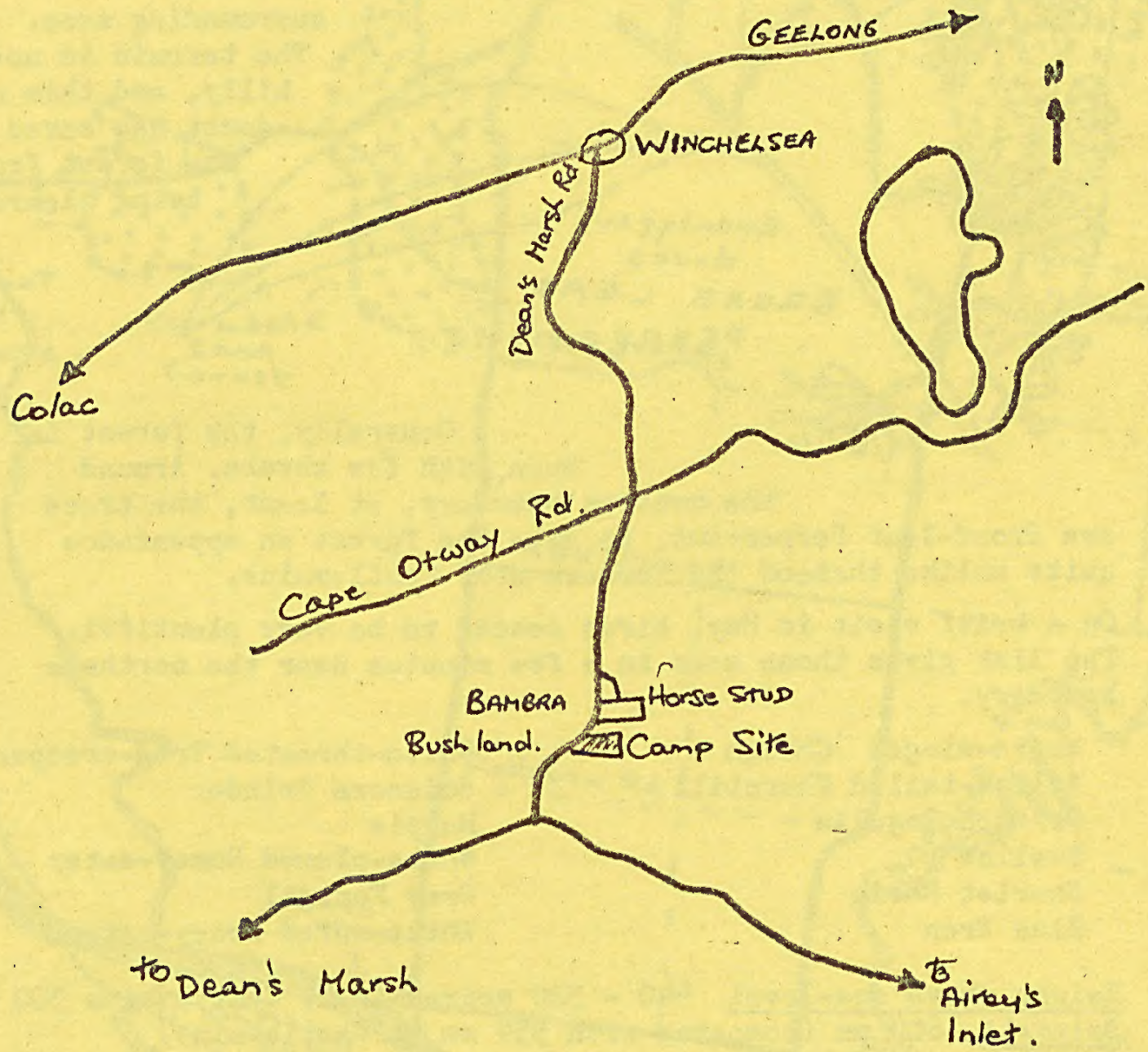
Friday evening August 28: Arrival and refreshment

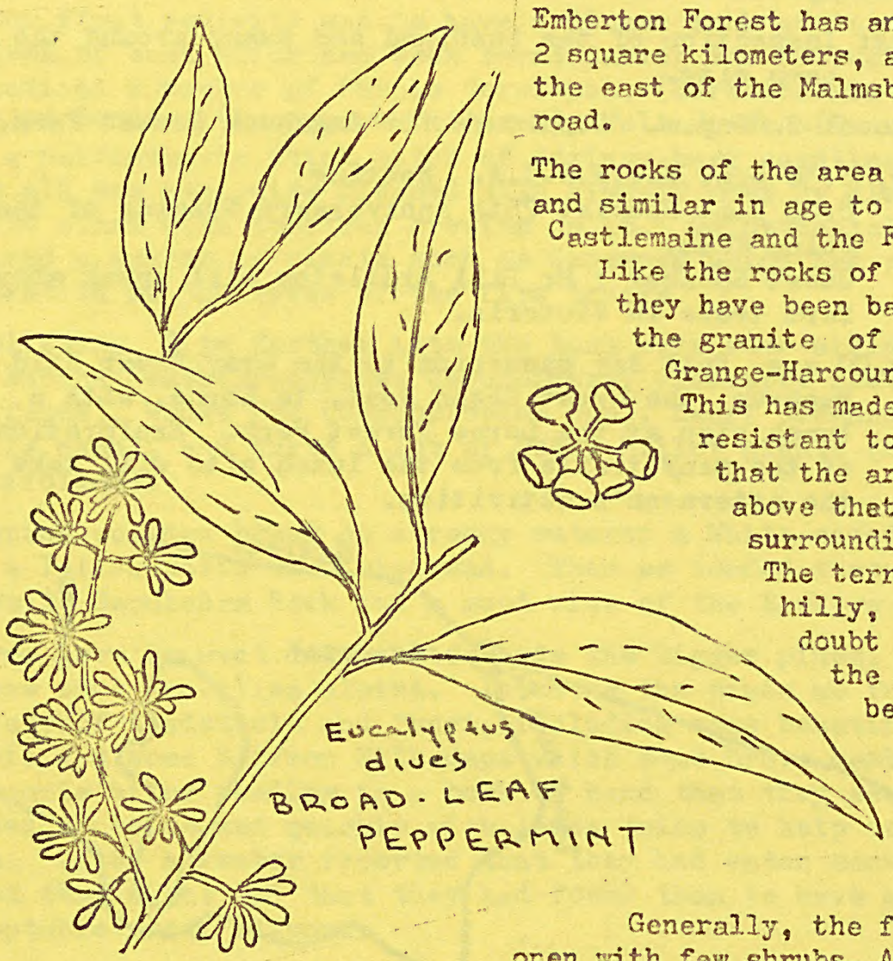
Saturday morning: Inspection of the bushland and swamp around the camp site.

Saturday afternoon: 2.00 p.m. Departure for Angahook Forest Park.

Saturday evening, 6.30 p.m. W.V.F.N.C.A. Meeting
8.00 p.m Special 25th Anniversary Evening of the Colac Club.
Guest Speaker : Mr Bill Middleton will speak about farm trees in Victoria.

Sunday morning 9.00 a.m. Full day excursion to the Grey River Road Reserve, the Great Ocean Road, to Lorne, with a lunch stop at the Lorne Forest Park. Exploration of the many trails from the lunch site will take up the afternoon's activities.





Emberton Forest has an area of about 2 square kilometers, and is to the east of the Malmsbury - Metcalfe road.

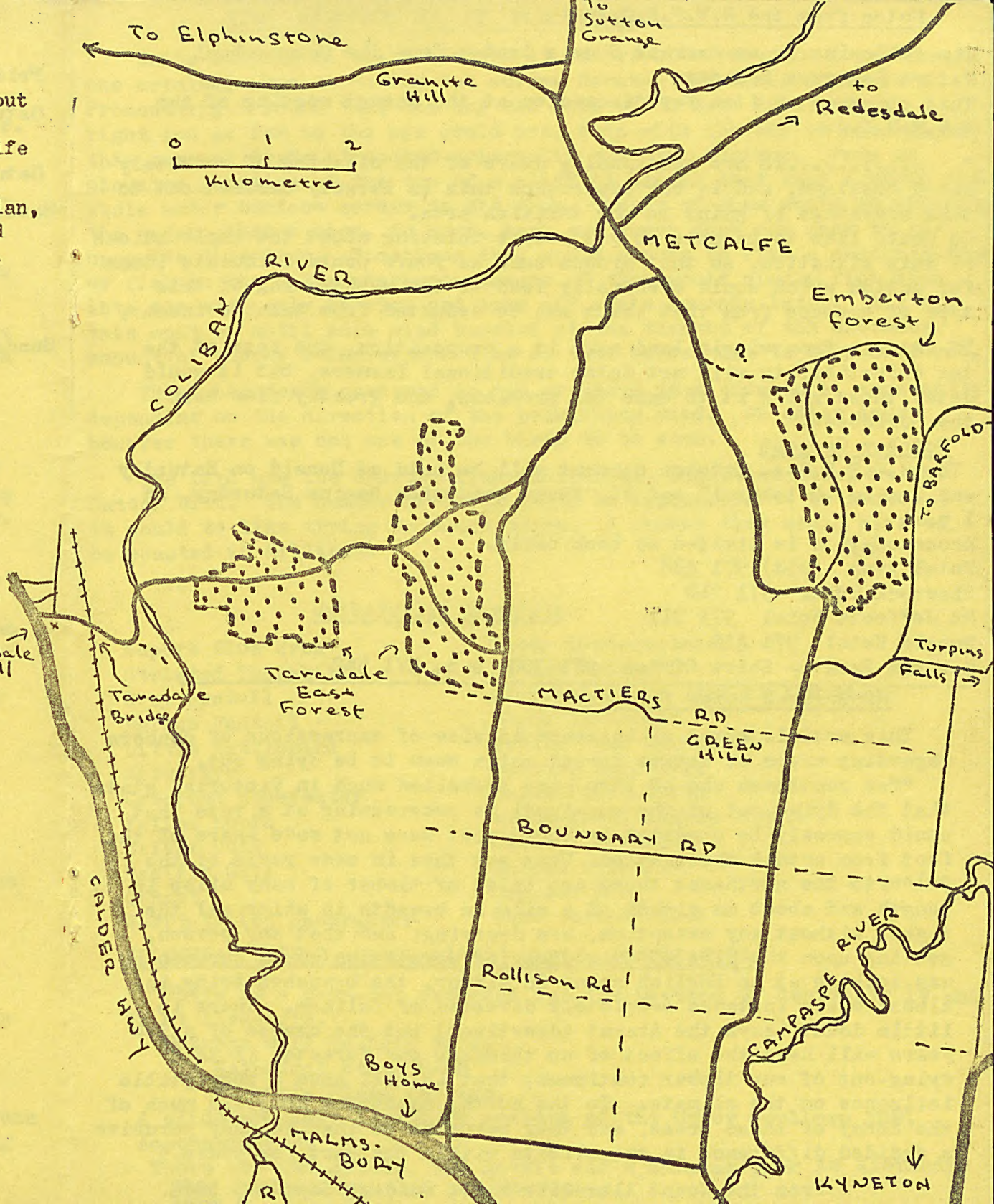
The rocks of the area are Ordovician, and similar in age to those around Castlemaine and the Fryers Ridge. Like the rocks of the Ridge, they have been baked hard by the granite of the Sutton Grange-Harcourt area. This has made the rock resistant to erosion so that the area is now above that of the surrounding area. The terrain is now hilly, and this no doubt has saved the forest from being cleared.

Generally, the forest is open, with few shrubs. Around the western boundary, at least, the trees are Broad-leaf Peppermint, to give the forest an appearance quite unlike that of the forests near Castlemaine.

On a brief visit in May, birds seemed to be very plentiful. The list gives those seen in a few minutes near the northern boundary.

White-winged Chough	White-throated Tree-creeper
Yellow-tailed Thornbill	Scissors Grinder
Crimson Rosella	Magpie
Swallow	White-plumed Honey-eater
Scarlet Robin	Grey Fantail
Blue Wren	White-eared Honey-eater

Height above sea-level 440 - 520 metres (c.f. Castlemaine 300 m)
Rainfall 600 mm (compared with 554 mm at Castlemaine)



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Notes from the W.V.F.N.C.A.

The following is an extract from a letter from the Warrnambool Nature Reserves Society.
This concerns an item for discussion at the August meeting of the W.V.F.N.C.A.

" .....we are continually aware of the clearing of privately owned bushland, and in our experience this is largely carried out to take advantage of gains in the taxation area.
We would like to be able to get people thinking about the implications of this situation, so that groups such as yours would formulate ideas for action which would eventually lead to the withdrawing of this type of expense from that which can be deducted from taxable income.

If returns from virgin land make it a proposition, the loss of the tax deductibility will not deter traditional farmers, but it would deter those using it to ease tax problems, and greatly slow down the bulldozer."

October Campout

The W.V.F.N.C.A. October campout will be held at Donald on Saturday and Sunday, October 17 and 18. First excursion begins Saturday, at 1 p.m.
Accommodation is limited so book early.
Motel Avon (054) 971 488
Shamrock Hotel 971 210
Mt Jeffcott Hotel 971 011
Donald Hotel 971 410
Caravan Park - Shire Office 971 300 a.h. 971 562

Historical Notes from Ray

This article seems of interest in view of expressions of concern regarding areas of native forest which seem to be dying out.

"Two gentlemen who of late have travelled much in Victoria, state that the dying-out of the eucalypti is progressing at a rate that would scarcely be credited by those that were not made aware of the fact from actual observation. They say that in some parts of the colonyto the northeast there are belts of timber of many miles in length and about an eighth of a mile in breadth in which all the trees, without any exception, are decaying; and that any person, getting upon the line of this decaying vegetation would suppose he was looking at an English scene in winter, the branches being in almost every instance completely divested of foliage. There is little doubt (says the Ararat Advertiser) but the course of a few years will have the effect of so thinning our forests, if this dying-out of our timber continues, that it will have a perceptible influence on the climate. To the north, squatters complain much of the decay of these trees, and they perceive or imagine they perceive a decided difference in the climate within the past few years."

From the Mount Alexander Mail, Friday, Sept 11, 1868

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT WALKERVILLE

While camping on the foreshore at Walkerville recently I was amazed one morning, when on gazing out across Waratah Bay towards Wilson's Promontory, I found that the sky was full of birds. From left to right and as far as the eye could see, even with the aid of binoculars, this mass of birds stretched apparently over the horizon. From an elevated position at the top of a cliff it seemed that they covered the whole water surface across to the Prom. Masses of them would go skimming the water, then a rise, to soar, bank and swoop down and back in the opposite direction. Sometimes they would appear to find a concentration of fish in the water whereupon masses of them would simply flop down into the sea, only to rise and take off again seconds later. All day this went on until one's mind boggled at the thought of the enormous amount of energy being expended by so many birds just to keep airborne.

This phenomenon occurred on two or three more occasions, apparently depending on the direction of the prevailing wind. On other days however there was not one of the birds to be seen.

The bird was the Short-tailed Shearwater, otherwise known as the Mutton bird. The number of birds would be impossible to estimate, it would be like trying to count stars. I reckon they would have to be counted in Millions. GB

Walkerville Birdlist

Superb Blue Wren	Sooty Oystercatcher
Striated Thornbill	Hooded Dotterel
Grey Fantail	Magpie (out on reef at low tide)
Rufous Fantail	Black Cormorant
Little Wattlebird	Little Pied Cormorant
Silvereye	Eastern Spinebill
Crescent Honeyeater	White-faced Heron
Yellow Robin	Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike
Silver Gull	Crimson Rosella
Pacific Gull	Golden Whistler
Gannet	Crested Tern
Short-tailed Shearwater	Cape Barren Goose

VICTORIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS ASSOCIATION

There is a camp-out proposed for the weekend of September 19 and 20 at Alexandra.

Outings will be held to :-

Cathedral State Park

McKenzie Flora Reserve.

A slide evening, hosted by members of the Upper Goulburn FNC.

Accommodation:

There are two motels, two hotels and a caravan park in Alexandra

For further details, see secretary.

Club Calendar

Friday, July 10. Meeting. Guest speaker, Mr H. Barclay, President Creswick F.N.C.
Subject "Spiders"

Saturday, July 11.
Outing: Emberton. A flora reserve in the Taradale district which was set aside by the L.C.C.
Leader, Mr E. Perkins. Leave Ed. Centre at 1.30 p.m.

Friday, August 14.
Meeting. Film night. A program of interesting 16 mm. movie films.

Saturday. Aug. 15.
Outing: The Wellsford Forest. Distance is about 55 km. As this is further than usual we will depart Ed. Centre at 10 a.m. A BBQ lunch has been suggested.

Friday, Sept.11.
Meeting. Subject "Beekeeping"
Speaker; Mr R. Goodman

Sunday, Sept. 13.
Outing: The Muckleford Forest, to be held in association with the Maryborough F.N.C. Meet at Ed. Centre at 1.30 or at the Gowar School at 2.p.m.

Monday, Sept.21.
Outing: The annual Show-day holiday long hike.
This year, we depart from the High School, walk through the Pine Forest of Moonlight Flat to Lawson's Lookout; down to Expedition Pass reservoir for lunch, thence return to the High School by a more southerly route.

Friday, Oct 9
Meeting: Guest Speaker, Mr P. Ellis
Subject "The Rutaceae"

Saturday Oct 10
Outing; Taradale

Friday, November 13
Meeting: Guest Speaker, Dr F Harrap of Ballarat C.A.E.
Subject, "Birds of Mosquito Flat".

WANTED

More articles for the "Naturalist". Club members, do not be bashful, please put pen to paper and let the Ed. have more material to chhose from for the next edition. Other members will be interested in what you have seen, or in your opinions on matters to do with Natural History

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